THE SPECIFIED PATTERNS OF NOUN PHRASES USED BY THE FOURTH SEMESTER STUDENTS IN THEIR PARAGRAPHS

Muhammad Basri D[1], Andi Tenri Ampa[2], and Sitti Halijah[3]

[1, 3] Universitas Muslim Indonesia Makassar

[2]Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar

basri_fs@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The article presented the results of a descriptive study about the English noun phrases that the students had used in their paragraphs. It aimed to specify the English NP patterns with their degrees and examples. Each specified pattern was exemplified and analyzed by identifying and classifying the constituents that were used in the noun phrase constructions. The procedures of data analysis were pre-analysis, the analysis, and post-analysis. The research findings indicated that the fourth semester students had produced 23 specified patterns of the English noun phrases, i.e.: id+H, adj+H, id+adj+H, quant+H, H+PrepP, id+H+PrepP, adj+H+PrepP, quant+H+PrepP, id+adj+H+Rel.Cl , and H+to inf Cl. The pattern [id+H] had the greatest percentage (37.46%). The other specified patterns had very low percentages, such as [quant+N.mod+H] (1.77%), [id+gen+H] (1.47%), [id+adj+H+Rel.Cl] (0.88%), and [quant+H+Rel.Cl] (0.29%). It was concluded that only the simple patterns were most frequently used in writing paragraphs, so that the complex patterns which contained more pre-modifiers and post modifiers of the English noun phrase constructions had to be introduced to the students in learning the English writing skills.

Keywords: Specified Patterns, Noun Phrases, Paragraphs

INTRODUCTION

In this world there are about 6,000 languages spoken (Crystal, 1997), and English has become the global language of the world. English has become the third largest if it is seen from a number of native speakers, i.e. 341 million inhabitants, with at least 140 countries, after Mandarin Chinese with 874 million inhabitants of 16 countries, and Hindi (India) with 366 million inhabitants of 17 countries (O'Neil, ed., 2010). It has been understood that English has become the first largest language in the world when it is seen from a number of countries using it as an official language. Today the English language is still ranked first as the international language and the language of the global world.

In Indonesia, the status of English is known as a foreign language. That is, the English language is not used as an alternative language, so that the opportunity is very limited in its use to communicate. In other Asian countries, such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Bangladesh, the status of English is known as the second language and as an official language. Being compared with Indonesian, the national language, it has a high function and role, which is used as the language of instruction in the teaching and learning process.

To view a language from a perspective of the philosophy, it plays its respective roles with respect to the nature, origin, socio-cultural values, and its use. In general, the people of South Sulawesi are bilingual with the local language and Indonesian. The local language is the language of ethnic group and Indonesian is the unifying language of inter-ethnic. It is the language which is used as a *lingua franca* in establishing communication within the people in any community. English and Indonesian are also used for meetings of

international level. English and Indonesian are two different languages, and they certainly have different systems or rules. The main difference occurs in phrases of syntactic rules, especially NP and VP. However, the English NP is the principally problematic issue that the students are confronted with in learning syntax.

The influence of global information that flows very rapidly makes the language and literature very important to highlight the role of the social status and function, so that all of them can be applied well within the scope of both linguistic and non-linguistic matters. Besides, the matters of competence and performance are obviously crucial in learning a language (Basri, et al., 2013). The knowledge of linguistic structure is referred to as competence, whereas the realization of this knowledge in actual event is called performance (Titone and Danesi, 1985).

Based on the structural linguistics, the English syntax is one of the important subjects that the students need to understand in language studies. A mastery of syntax makes them capable to speak and write English accurately. Its areas cover the English phrases and clauses. The English phrases have various divisions, i.e.: noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), adjective phrase (Adj P), adverb phrase (Adv P), and prepositional phrase (Prep P). The English NP is very important because this type can fill in four functions: subject, object, complement, and adjunct. A predicate function is filled in by a VP.

It is stated by Jackson (1985) that the subject function is normally filled in by an NP; the predicate function is always filled in by a VP; the object function may be filled in by either an NP or a Prep P; the complement function may be filled in by either an NP or an Adj.P; and the adjunct function is filled in by an Adv P, a Prep P, or an NP. It can also be exemplified that the clause 'Jane visited her family last month' filled in these functions. The VP 'visited' functions as a predicate in a clause. The other clause parts (Jane, her family, and last month') are NPs that function as a subject, an object, and an adjunct, respectively. Therefore, the English NPs have the greatest probabilities to be used in any clause, so that this phrase type is very necessary to master in learning English.

Syntax is frequently considered as a mathematic subject because it contains analyses. The well-known analyses are bracketed, immediate constituent, and tree diagram analyses. Each of these has a definite use to make the students understand for identifying and classifying the syntactic categories with their functions. The subject requires knowledge and skills. It is not an easy job for them, but it copes with a linguistic knowledge and a language skill. Therefore, to design a model for the instructional materials of the English syntax, we need to know all syntactic matters with these analyses.

Syntax is one of the fundamental subjects in English department. By understanding the syntactic structure, the students can make the English clauses accurately. They can identify and correct the grammatical errors in English. The students consider that syntax is not easy, but it is enjoyable to learn. It is very essential to master for the sake of communicating thoughts and feelings to other people in accurate way (Basri, et al., 2013).

In this article, the focus on study is concerned with the English NP. The scope of this NP deals with the ways of constructions that are made in specified strings of constituents. Such scope aims to specify the NP phrase patterns with their features and degrees of specified patterns in each construction. Hence, this NP category has specified patterns, consisting of

constituents that should be organized accurately in a definite string.

The English NP is potentially constructed by a pre-modifier, a head, and a post-modifier. Jackson (1985) remarks a specific order of pre-modification in a noun phrase as follows: identifier-numeral/quantifier-adjective-noun modifier, as for example: 'these five charming country cottages'. The example of this NP can be analyzed as 'these five charming country cottages' (NP); these (id) five (num/quant) charming (adj) country (noun-M) cottages' (H).

As a matter of fact, language is patterned or rule-governed behaviour. Language as pattern is, in fact, easily recognized as soon as linguistic rules are violated. To know a language implies that one has internalized the set of rules that specify word and sentence formation, phonetic combination, etc. (Titone and Danesi, 1985). Then, a rule of grammar is a generalization. It is a formula that one makes to account for how a given grammatical construction usually behaves. However, this is the best method of improving the students' use of English grammar with this guide by studying the formula and sample sentences, and then practicing exercises at the end of each section of testing English as a foreign language (Pyle and Muñoz, 1986).

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. 1 Phrases as the Basic Constituents in Clauses

The English sentences consist of syntactic constituents, let us say, the phrases. For example, in a sentence (an independent clause) 'Many people will build a school' contain two types of phrases, i.e.: "Many people (NP), 'will build' (VP), and 'a school' (NP). The syntactic structure of this sentence is SPO (Subject, Predicate, and Object). The first NP functions as a subject and the second one functions as an object. Thus, a VP always fills in a predicate in a sentence or a clause.

In this connection, Jackson (1985) elaborates the structure of clauses and specifies the obligatory elements contained in seven basic clause types. He clarifies the five possible functions that phrases may fill in the English clause structure, i.e. subject, verb, object, complement, and adjunct (abbreviated S,V,O,C,A). For a particular aim, however, the symbol P is used for substituting the V in this study. Thus, the same aim is written as S,P,O,C,A (subject, predicate, object, complement, and adjunct). These five functions are filled in by the categories or types. They are noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), adjective phrase (Adj.P), adverb phrase (Adv.P), and prepositional phrase (Prep.P).

The basic structure of clauses is simply composed of 'S+P' as constant elements, and what follows these elements depends on the kinds of clause types. These types are called main or independent clauses. The other clauses are called subordinate or dependent clauses; they are very complex. Therefore, the English phrases are required to be mastered immediately as the basic constituents in constructing any clause.

Bell (1987) points out that the linguist sees a language as form, namely sounds or letters and their combinations into larger units, such as words, sentences, and so forth. This is the problem of syntax in a language form. To Harrison (1987) syntax is the one dealing with the way in which words are put together to express thoughts or ideas sensibly.

Brown and Miller (1986) exemplify that 'The dog frightened the child' is a sentence. At an intuitive level *the dog,*

frightened and *the child* appear relevant constituents in a way that strings like *frightened the* or *dog frightened* do not. The word 'string' is supposed to be used as a neutral term to refer to any sequence of constituents. The words *the dog or frightened the child* or indeed the whole of sentence as strings without a commitment as their status as constituents or any identification of the type of constituents. Furthermore, again at an intuitive level the strings *the dog* and *the child* seem to be constituents of the same type.

In this connection, we say that syntax is one of the fundamental subjects in English department. By understanding the English syntactic structure, the students can make the English clauses accurately. They can identify and correct the grammatical errors in English. The students consider that syntax is not easy, but it is enjoyable to learn. It is very essential to master for the sake of communicating thoughts and feelings to other people in accurate way.

Syntax is the sentence patterns of language. Knowing a language also means having ability to combine morphemes and words together to express a particular meaning. That part of linguistic knowledge which is concerning the structure of sentences is called syntax (Fromkin and Rodman, 1983). And, Por and Spivak (2000) state that various modes, aspects, and the future tense are expressed analytically rather than morphologically.

In syntactic evidence, the six semester (level 3) students have got greater accurate performance than their inaccuracy (54.97% > 36.34%). Anyhow, there are still a number of non-productive features of syntactic evidence, i.e.: future tense, perfective aspect, simple past, past perfect, and present perfect voices, and interrogative of indicative and purpose of subjunctive moods. The implication of the above statements suggests that those students be trained seriously to acquire morphological categories and a few of syntactic categories with their related features, so that they will be able to use these categories with their features in their interactive utterances (Basri, 2005).

Therefore, Basri (2005) suggests that the English department students in particular levels be trained more intensively to acquire morpho-logical categories with their related features than the syntactic ones, so that they will be able to use them in their interactive utterances. Some syntactic categories with their related features are also necessary to practice so intensively in the teaching and learning processes that they will gain capabilities to use them in communicative interactions. He also suggests that the lecturers of English develop the students' capabilities to gain the successful skills adequately because these issues are closely related to the progress of morphological and syntactic performance products in their interactive utterances.

2.2 *The English Phrase Constructions*

The English phrase constructions are mainly concerned with the constructions of phrase types based on a syntactic analysis. The English noun phrase (NP) is potentially constructed by a pre-modifier, a head, and a post-modifier. The clause 'Many people will build a school building in my country' contains two NPs that function as a subject (Many people) and an object (a school building). A syntactic analysis of the phrases 'Many people' and 'a school building in my country' is as follows: 'Many people' (NP); Many (quant) people (H), and then 'a school building in my country'' (NP); a (id) school (Noun-M) building (H) in my country (Prep P); in (prep) my country (NP); my (id) country (H).

The full word of 'quant' is a quantifier that is a kind of determiner to indicate a numeral item, such as two, second, many, much, a few, and some and that of 'H' is head. The head of NP is a noun, and this head-noun makes an NP distinctive from the other phrases in English. The full word of 'id' is identifier. An identifier includes definite and indefinite articles (a/an, the), possessive adjectives (my, his, her, our), and demonstrative adjectives (this, that, these, those). A Noun-M (a noun modifier) is a word, having a noun class, that functions to modify a head-noun. It is one of the pre-modifiers of an NP.

Indefinite articles, possessive adjectives, and demonstrative adjectives are the so-called determiners. Herndon (1976) states that the workings of the determiner class of function words are described in some detail under the form class which they appear. The most commonly used members of this category are *the, a, an*, and *some*. Such words have been defined as those having little or no lexical meaning. They are categorized as function words.

Jackson (1985) remarks a specific order of pre-modification in a noun phrase as follows: identifier-numeral/quantifier-adjective-noun modifier, as for example: 'these five charming country cottages'. The example of this NP can be analyzed as 'these five charming country cottages' (NP); these (id) five (num/quant) charming (adj) country (noun-M) cottages' (H).

The English verb phrase (VP) is generally constructed by auxiliary and lexical verb. In a syntactic category, the VP minimally consists of one word as a head, that is a lexical or a non-lexical verb, as for examples in these clauses: (1) 'Some workers <u>come</u> early'; (2) 'They <u>are</u> here now'. The underlining words are called the VPs, even though each consists of only one

word or constituent. The VP 'come' is a lexical verb and the VP 'are' is a non-lexical verb. The constituent 'are' does not have any meaning, but it has a grammatical function. The entity of 'are' functions to make a statement because there is no statement (clause) in English without a verb. Fromkin and Rodman (1983) state that when you know a language, you do not only know what the constituents in the sentences are, but you also know how those constituents function in that language.

The verb is the most important word-class of all. Verbs are important because: (1) The root of a sentence is normally a finite verb; (2) Verbs have more complex valencies than any other word classes and provide more 'syntactic glue' that holds the sentence together; and (3) Verbs have a richer system than any other class (Hudson, 2001).

The syntactic properties of the English verb are concerned with tense, aspect, voice, and mood. The combinations of auxiliary verbs may occur in a VP construction. Hence, a VP is popularly constructed by an auxiliary and a lexical verb, but in another case it is also constructed by a verb as a head. The English verbal expressions (often called verb phrases) take several basic components. The verb forms participate in verbal expressions (Rubba, 2001). Every verb has four basic forms that are called the principal parts of the verb. These parts consist of present form (e.g. visit, write), past form (e.g. visited, wrote), present participle (e.g. visiting, writing), and past participle (e.g. visited, written). These forms are clearly used in the related tenses.

The active voice takes the form of 'Something does something'. The passive is in the form of 'Something is done'. Overuse of the passive voice makes a passive dense (overused). However, not all passives can be

avoided, hence some passives are necessary and useful (Lynch, 1997).

In theoretical and descriptive study in sentence or clause types, mood is especially used for the verbs to make reference to syntactic and semantic contrasts signaled by alternative paradigms of verb, e.g. indicative, subjunctive, and imperative moods. Semantically, it is concerned with the speaker's attitudes towards the factual content of his utterance, e.g. uncertainty, definiteness, vagueness, and possibility (Crystal, 1987).

Like an NP, the English adjective phrase (Adj.P) has a specific order of words; that is ident adv+adj (H)+Post-M, as for example in a phrase 'very diligent to work at home'. Using brackets to analyze this phrase runs as follows: very diligent to work at home (Adj P); very (ident adv) diligent (H) to work at home (Post-M); to work (inf Cl) at home (Prep P); at (prep) home (NP). The head of an Adj P must be an adjective. And, it is the minimal construction of an Adj P that consists of one adjective as a head. Then, the constituent 'very' in the given phrase represents the other identifying adverbs in English. The constituents 'to work at home' consist of two post modifiers (Post-M), namely 'to work' and 'at home'.

An adverb is one of the word classes. It has three important functions in English. Similarly, De Boer (1982) remarks that adverbs are words that modify other words in sentences (usually adjectives, verbs, or other adverbs). There are some characteristics that are of importance to classify adverbs. The two of them are the classification as adverbs of manner (angrily, eagerly), adverbs of time (lately, immediately), adverbs of place (near, there), and adverbs of degree (very, too) and that as having mobility as modifiers, i.e.: their positions may be at beginning of sentences,

at the end of sentences, and between nouns and verbs.

Unlike the other English phrases, the prepositional phrase (Prep.P) does not have a head, but it has its own construction. Thus, a Prep.P is constructed with 'prep+NP (id+H)'. This pattern can be exemplified as follows: 'near the old building', 'before the library', 'in your room', at the end, for the first meeting, etc. A syntactic analysis of the phrase 'near the old building' can be done by using brackets as follows: near the old building (Prep.P); near (prep) the old building (NP); the (id) old (adj) building (H). A Prep.P may function as a post modifier of an NP. As for example in an NP 'a school building in my country', it contains a post modifier, namely 'in my country' (Prep.P). The phrase 'in my country' functions to modify an NP 'a school building'.

METHOD and MATERIALS

The research problems were oriented to syntactic issues of the learning products. The population consisted of the fourth semester students of English department, Faculty of Letters, Indonesia Moslem University in Makassar. The research used a random sampling technique that simply determined 30 pieces of the students' paragraphs. The variables covered the kinds of specified patterns with their features as their indicators or parameters of the English NP type in written corpuses. Each specified pattern was exemplified and analyzed by identifying and classifying the constituents that were used in the NP constructions.

The test had been used as a research instrument for assessing the students' proficiency in writing paragraphs in which the English NP patterns were used. The allocation of time used for doing the test was 90 minutes. The categories of data were

qualitative, internal, primary, and cross-sectional. These categories were concerned with the substances of the English NP patterns that were gathered immediately from the English department students in a certain period of time. All correct NP patterns in the students' paragraphs were

identified. A number of specified patterns collected were 23 kinds with the quantity (Q) of 339. Further, re-covering and re-editing the phrases processed the raw data. Finally, the soft data were prepared for being analyzed in three steps or procedures: pre-analysis (The raw data were grouped into the categories of specified patterns), the analysis (All of the specified patterns that had been formulated were accounted or quantified for being further computed in percentage rates), and post-analysis (The specified patterns were tabulated, exposed, and interpreted).

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The findings specify the interpretations of the English NP patterns made by the fourth semester students of English department, Faculty of Letters, UMI Makassar. The NP constructions may contain a pre-modifier and a head of noun. Other constructions also include a post modifier, but an NP consists of minimally one noun as a head (but not included in the data). The specific order of this phrase is id+quant+adj+N.mod+H+Post-M. The table as follows exemplifies the NP constructions made by the English department students.

From Table 1 indicates that the fourth semester students make 23 specified patterns of the English NP, i.e.: id+H, adj+H, id+adj+H, quant+H, H+PrepP, id+H+PrepP, adj+H+PrepP, quant+H+PrepP, id+adj+H+Rel.Cl , and H+to inf Cl. The pattern [id+H] has the greatest percentage (37.46%). The examples

of this pattern are a farmer, my parents, her control, a team, our body, her eyes, and her age. This is the easiest pattern to be used by the students in writing the English paragraphs. The greater percentage of pattern made by the students in their paragraphs is [quant+H], that is 15.93%. The examples of this pattern are many people, two days, many members, many teenagers, two boys, and one brother. Then, the next greater patterns after [quant+H] pattern are [id+adj+H] (14.16%), [H+PrepP] (6.19%), and [adj+H] (5.90%). These specified patterns are exemplified, respectively, in these NPs: a new friend, information from internet, and social media. These last three patterns can be used easier than the other two patterns, i.e. [id+H+PrepP] (4.42%) and [quant+H+PrepP] (3.24%). These two patterns are exemplified by my holiday in Barru and all members of my family to represent the others.

The other specified patterns have very low percentages, such as [quant+N.mod+H] (1.77%), [id+gen+H] (1.47%), [id+adj+H+Rel.Cl] (0.88%), and [quant+H+Rel.Cl] (0.29%). These specified patterns are also exemplified, respectively, in these NPs: fifty two years old, my mother's job, the important thing that we need, and many people who live in the mountain. Thus, the kinds of these specified patterns of NP should be practiced by the students in their learning carrier, especially the post modifiers of NPs that the students get problems to use them in writing. However, the other patterns which have greater percentages are also necessary to practice in learning the English writing skills.

Table 1: The Kinds of Specified NP Patterns

No	Specified Patterns	Examples	Q	%
1	id+H	a farmer	127	37.46
2	adj+H	social media	20	5.90
3	id+adj+H	a new friend	48	14.16
4	quant+H	many people	54	15.93
5	gen+H	Chindralela's dress	1	0.29
6	quant+adj+H	two elder brothers	4	1.18
7	id+gen+H	my mother's job	5	1.47
8	id+N.mod+H	a memory card	3	0.88
9	quant+N.mod+H	fifty two years old	6	1.77
10	id+adj+N.mod+H	a long time ago	1	0.29
11	id+adv+adj+H	the most important thing	3	0.88
12	H+PrepP	information from internet	21	6.19
13	id+H+PrepP	my holiday in Barru	15	4.42
14	adj+H+PrepP	delicious food for us	2	0.59
15	quant+H+PrepP	all members of my family	11	3.24
16	N.mod+H+PrepP	memory cards for camera	1	0.29
17	id+adj+H+PrepP	the higher cost of education	2	0.59
18	H+Rel.Cl	people who live in the mountain	1	0.29
19	id+H+Rel.Cl	the jobs that they get	4	1.18
20	quant+H+Rel.Cl	many people who live in the mountain	1	0.29
21	id+adj+H+Rel.Cl	the important thing that we need	3	0.88
22	H+to inf Cl	money to continue their school	2	0.59
23	id+H+to inf Cl	their children to work	4	1.18
Total			339	100

CONCLUSION

The fourth semester students have produced 23 kinds of specified patterns of the English NPs, i.e.: id+H, adj+H, id+adj+H, quant+H, H+PrepP, id+H+PrepP, adj+H+PrepP, quant+H+PrepP, id+adj+H+Rel.Cl , and H+to inf Cl. The pattern [id+H] has the greatest percentage (37.46%). The greater percentage of pattern made by the students in their paragraphs is [quant+H], that is 15.93%. Then, the next greater patterns after [quant+H] pattern are [id+adj+H] (14.16%), [H+PrepP] (6.19%), and [adj+H] (5.90%). The other specified patterns have very low percentages, such as [quant+N.mod+H] (1.77%), [id+gen+H] (1.47%), [id+adj+H+Rel.Cl] (0.88%), and [quant+H+Rel.Cl] (0.29%). The students are suggested that they review all kinds of specified patterns of the English NPs in order that they are able to improve their capability to write the English paragraphs. The lecturers of English are suggested that they develop the students' capabilities to gain the successful knowledge and skills of the English NPs with their specified patterns because these syntactic materials are the fundamentals to master the English clauses and sentences, so that they can gain the progress of written utterances.

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